

State Board of Education/Tennessee Higher Education Commission Joint Meeting

**THEC Conference Room, 18th Floor, Parkway Towers, Nashville TN
January 25, 2007, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**

Briefing on the Agenda

The meeting will be dedicated to state-level initiatives designed to improve student readiness for college and work. While these initiatives may have different sponsoring agencies, they are all connected. Together they represent collaboration among K-12 and higher education agencies and systems with the common goal of raising the educational attainment level of Tennesseans.

Many dimensions of these initiatives are derived from Tennessee consultation with national and regional high school reform movements, such as the American Diploma Project, the ACT Benchmarks for Success, and the Southern Regional Education Board's School Leaders reform. Other states have also been consulted regarding their successes in increasing rigor in high school curricula as it is aligned with expectations for student performance at college entry. The work done in Kentucky, North Carolina, Georgia, and Oklahoma has informed Tennessee discussions.

The agenda will feature the following interrelated initiatives:

College Readiness 2006. As the context for the entire joint meeting, Gary Nixon, State Board of Education (SBE) will present 2006 ACT data for Tennessee compared to national data on the status of recent high school graduates' performance on national measures for college preparation, the ACT Readiness for College Benchmarks. Using data to shape decisions is a hallmark of the current Tennessee reform efforts, and the K-12 and higher education alliances see the Tennessee ACT Benchmark level of attainment as a call for change. In 2006, only 17 percent of Tennessee high school graduates (21 percent nationally) met all four benchmarks (Math, Science, English, and Reading). A benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher and a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses.

Recommendations from the High School Redesign Task Force. Dr. Nixon (SBE) and Susan Bunch, State Department of Education (SDE) will report on recommendations for redefining the high school diploma, graduation requirements, and the overall increased rigor and relevance these changes represent. The Task Force drew on cooperation of K-12, higher education, legislators, and the Tennessee Business Roundtable in building sustainable high school standards. The recommendations address the benefits of early assessment and student placement, strengthening the rigor of the senior year, use of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, and greater participation in dual enrollment.

K-12 Curriculum Standards. Susan Bunch will report on the SDE's contract with Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel) to conduct an

analysis of Tennessee curriculum standards, including mathematics K-Gateway (8th grade). This analysis, which uses National Council for Teachers of Mathematics criteria, is directly consonant with the Tennessee P-16 Council's Math Committee's work on high school-to-college math curricula analysis, and members of the P-16 committee are engaged in the McRel analysis.

P-16 Math Committee. Linda Doran, THEC, will report on the year-long process undertaken by a committee of middle school, high school, community college, and university math faculty to map current State standards for high school mathematics against the ACT Math Readiness for College Benchmark (score range 20-23). Directed by curriculum specialists from the Department of Education, these math professionals completed their systematic analysis of learning expectations and performance indicators. They identified relatively few gaps between the two sets of standards themselves but questioned the level of rigor expected from State student and teacher performance indicators. THEC staff, SDE assessment leaders, UT and TBR system personnel, and the executive director of the SBE are participating in the committee work, with commonality of college-entry math learning outcomes being the next step.

Tennessee Governor's Academy for Science and Mathematics. Katie High, UT System office, will provide a status report on the Academy, housed in Knoxville on the campus of the Tennessee School for the Deaf. The Academy is slated to open in August 2007. The first class of 24 high school juniors is currently being recruited. These juniors, from throughout Tennessee, will be able to participate in an integrated curriculum with a solid underpinning of physics and calculus. The residential Academy will incorporate the resources of the University of Tennessee Knoxville, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to enrich the educational opportunity for Tennessee's best and brightest.

School Leadership Commission. Mary Jo Howland, SBE, will summarize the objectives of the SBE's school leader preparation reform. The SBE partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board's School Leaders Model is aimed at defining school leader preparation appropriate for the current demands of leading and managing schools. This multi-state SREB project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The project plans to change expectations about school leader performance through revisions in certification, school leader preparation and professional development, and evaluation of academic program effectiveness. Colleges of Education at the University of Memphis and East Tennessee State University are piloting aspects of the project.

Teacher Quality. Paula Short, TBR System office, will brief the THEC and the SBE on the TBR Teacher Quality Initiative. This initiative, involving public and private teacher preparation programs, K-12 and higher education personnel, is focusing on five areas for improving teacher preparation: knowledge base, characteristics of quality teachers, professionalizing teaching, modeling, and mentoring. The core of the initiative is the knowledge base, with the goal to ensure that all TBR teacher education programs have a common set of core performance outcomes and measures appropriate for teacher licensure and entry into the teaching profession.